The Truth *about* Hollywood-Behind *the* Scenes

"Movieland" Quiet Because of Slump in Work, but Many Interesting Sights Present Themselves---How the Screen Stars Live and Play and Work

An unusual photograph of Miss Pickford, who is in but not of Hollywood.

**Below—
A Yukon "snow scene" taken in Hollywood, the "snow" being plain salt.**

William S. Hart, a prominent Hollywood figure, in his "street clothes."

**Below—
An echo of the Taylor murder case; what some believe is the main trouble with Hollywood.**

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CHAPTER IV.

WE rode from beauteous Hollywood down to the flats toward the ocean, where derricks against the skyline betrayed the oil wells of Culver City. The car stopped beside a low cottage. Outside the cottage, with her back to us, stood a crookback witch peering into a hand mirror propped on a window sill while she applied dabs of fresh putty to an already terrifying nose and chin.

Our guide said, "This is Mark Jones. Mr. Jones, I'd like you to meet this man from New York who has come here to write up the movies." The witch, turning and grinning with every snaggle tooth, extended a hand. "Fine weather we're having," she said, and Mark Jones, kindliest of men, blackest of motion picture villains, returned to his mirror and make-up box.

The guide took us around the corner of the cottage and we came to another one which had a front stoop. By the stoop crouched a Confederate soldier. He wore a gray uniform with "C. S. A." on the belt, forage cap, sword, square bowed spectacles and short side whiskers. The witch went over and joined him. The Confederate groveled in the sand at her feet, then suddenly leaped up, grasped the sword hilt and marched off very fine and resolute. Then he went back and did it again. He said something to the witch and she leered and clawed the air with wheedling fingers twisting in front of his face. But he waved her aside and, disregarding her mumbled curses, strode away. He strode maybe eight feet, then stopped and said to a youth waiting at the camera, "All right, let 'er go." All the action was repeated while the camera man cranked. Then the soldier came forward smiling to meet our guide.

"Harold," said the guide, "you better shake hands with this man. He's come from New York to write up the movies."

"Good heavens!" cried Harold Lloyd, for the "Secesh" was none other, "are we as bad as that?"

He proved to be boyish, unaffected, likable. He led forth his leading woman, Mildred Davis, a blue eyed, yellow haired, fragile looking girl. She wished it to be understood that she was indignant over the published stories about Hollywood and that lots of girls in the movies were just like those she had known at finishing school in Philadelphia. She dropped a curtsey and said precisely, "I am very glad to have met you," before going to the automobile which was to take them back into the hills for other scenes of the new Lloyd comedy. Mr. Lloyd paused to explain that the fragment we had just seen was part of a sequence in which he plays his own grandfather. He had never worn a disguise before.

"How long does it take you to make a comedy?" we asked him.

"Well, we've been five months and a half on this one, but it's nearly finished."

"Why so long," we said, knowing that many pictures are completed in a few weeks.

"I don't know, unless it is that you've got to take a lot of pains to make people laugh." The lad, excusing himself and holding the sword against his leg to stop its gyrations, ran off to join Miss Davis. Our guide sprinted us around the second cottage, where we came to a sign "Central Hotel" swinging from a two story shack. A big man in a blue shirt and overalls was rehearsing a recumbent burro. The burro was supposed to scramble to its feet when the big man, standing a few feet in front, snapped his fingers. In its own good time it did so.

"All right, Sammy, get aboard," called out another man, who by every token of riding breeches and leather puttees should have been a movie director, which indeed he was. A little negro boy with half his galluses missing shot up from nowhere, mounted the burro, dug his bare knees into his ribs and pounded the beast with his fists. The boy was Sunshine Sammy. If you saw "Penrod" you remember him. In the new picture it will appear that it was Sammy's frantic goading that stirred the burro from its siesta in front of the Central Hotel, but we are here to swear that it was the snapping and clucking of that trainer out in front beyond the range of the camera.

Sammy then sauntered over to a neighboring log pile and sat down beside a young negro woman. She is his tutor—a graduate of the University of Texas. The law compels each studio to provide schooling for its actors not yet 16 years of age. Sunshine Sammy snatches his education in large bites between camera shots. On this day the textbook was "Work and Play With Language." The teacher showed him a picture and he had to write a story about it. When we left Sammy he was bent over his copy book and had written as far as "Once there were two goats lived on opposite sides of the stream."

Hollywood Studio Style Differs Materially

Studios of the Hollywood district vary widely in appearance. Some sprawl like lumber yards and are about as tidy. Others would satisfy the most exacting architect or housewife. The Hal E. Roach Studios, where Harold Lloyd, Sunshine Sammy and others make their comedies, are of the informal type. The Goldwyn Studios, which we next visited, are a great white city of forty-two buildings, eighteen of which are permanent steel and concrete or stucco. These with the temporary "sets" are scattered over fifty acres of ground.

The talisman that got us past the gatekeeper was the name of Joe A. Jackson, publicity chief, whom we had known in New York as a newspaper man. The master of the gate phoned Mr. Jackson and suddenly became human and opening the barrier told us where to find him. We passed through the administration building into the "lot." In the scene opening before us were well kept lawns and tropical foliage—ten acres of lawn and garden, the dutiful Joe told us—many little parks set down between and surrounding four great glass roofed, glass walled stages where interior scenes are made. We inspected a workshop as big as New York's City Hall, where movie scenery is made; a huge property room where 15,000 objects ranging from thrones of emperors to pine needles are neatly classified and tagged; a wardrobe room from among whose 5,000 costumes can instantly be summoned the appareling of King Menelik's army, the hordes of Ghengis Khan, a harem, a whaling expedition or a bull fight; a laboratory with aproned girl alchemists transforming raw yellow film into the magic ribbon of the projectoscope and with gigantic wooden drums on which the finished ribbon was being dried, revolving in heated atmosphere.

But I have no intention of wearying the reader with a detailed description of the complex organism which is the modern picture making plant. Joe Jackson and I walked around the property room and a glassed in stage that would house a Zeppelin and found ourselves standing in front of the Town Hall and flagpole and looking past Anders feed store, down a village street toward comfortable looking cottages behind fine shade trees. I liked especially an old brown house set back from the street with a geranium bordered walk leading to the porch.

"It's interesting on the inside, too," said Joe. "Let's go in." We stepped firmly up to the porch, opened the front door and were confronted by—nothing. That is, there were timbers propping up the walls of the house; otherwise merely a stubbly open space. The house was a carefully built and painted shell. The two large trees that gave it shade—sycamores, I think—had been brought from miles away. The geraniums were in buried pots. The lawn was transplanted sod. The brown house was a set built in a few hours for Rupert Hughes's play, "The Old Nest." The village of which it was part had been peopled for a day. Grass was now growing in the streets. The studio spaces of California are filled with deserted villages. It surprised me that they were allowed to stand after their mission was accomplished, but I was told that with a little change here and there most of them can be used again and again for other pictures.

Beyond this melancholy Main Street we came upon a high arched wall and a turret with a window and balcony. It was here that Will Rogers doubled for Romeo. He jumped backward from the balcony to a landing net, then from the landing net to the ground. With the film reversed and the landing net cut out he seemed in the picture to spring from the ground to the balcony to greet his Juliet.

Next we traversed a street in Pekin constructed for Gouverneur Morris's photoplay, "A Tale of Two Worlds." For Boxer rebels several hundred Los Angeles Chinese were hired at $7.50 a day—the high cost of Chinese being one of the reasons why it takes so much money to make a movie spectacle. Nearby was a Mississippi River town, created for "The Sin Flood." A stroll along the levee brought us to the Five Points of New York as that spot appeared in 1869, reconstructed with the help of old prints for the Gertrude Atherton picture, "Don't Neglect Your Wife." Its crazy groggeries, drunken lampposts and rounded cobbles were all made on the lot.

Thence we passed into a street of New York's East Side, which even the Hon. Louis Zeltner would O. K. The Yiddish shop signs were authenticated by a rabbi from Los Angeles. This street was utilized in "Hungry Hearts." There are twenty or thirty acres of these strangely neighboring communities—all the world and its fantasies in Goldwyn's back yard. They are much more fascinating to the stranger than Coney Island, the only trouble being that the stranger can't get in any more than he can get behind the scenes in a theater.

10,000 Actors Rest In Card Catalogue

A glance into the casting office completed our visit to the Goldwyn establishment. There they let us look into filing cabinets where 10,000 men, women and children are card indexed, each with a photograph of the subject in his most alluring pose. These are the persons registered for employment in the pictures as players of parts, bit people or extras.

The next stop on the grand tour was Charley Chaplin's studio in Hollywood. On the way we passed several others, including the massive colonial mansion of Thomas H. Ince and the steep roofed, many colored, many angled, moated old mill of Irving Willat. This curious structure is said to be the House that Jack Built. If so Jack as an artist has never had the credit he deserves.

But what shall we say of Chaplin, who perpetrates his comedies in one of the beauty spots of Hollywood? You ride along Sunset Boulevard and come to a box hedge behind which are tall evergreens and palms screening a large white house of Colonial design. The fattest of oranges on the greenest of trees shine at you over the hedge. Among them a big cherry tree is in full bloom. Charley Chaplin does not live in the house, but his brother Syd does. It came with the estate, a whole block which Chaplin bought for $38,000, house and all, a few years ago, and is now worth $150,000. Residents of that part of Hollywood shrieked when they found that Chaplin had got the place and was going to build a studio. They protested on esthetic, material and all other grounds. But within fifteen days after the completion of the studio the value of abutting property jumped from 100 to 200 per cent. and the wailing died away. Chaplin had fooled them by erecting for his administration offices—the part of the studio which the public sees—a row of brick or stucco cottages which would do credit to an English cathedral town.

Penetrating one of these English cottages we came to the Chaplin "lot" and saw the steel and glass stage where the great pantomimist concocts his foolery. Just one company uses it—Chaplin's. There are two one storied rows of dressing rooms, one for men, the other for women. The dressing room of Edna Purviance, the Chaplin leading woman, who is to be starred independently, is little larger than the others. Between these two buildings is a deep swimming pool which serves for all sorts of aquatic mishaps. Drained it enabled Chaplin to do his trench fighting in "Shoulder Arms." We inspected his riding horse, Florrie, and learned from the contents of his garage that he has only two cars, a limousine and a touring car, with only one chauffeur. His property room is a museum of every relic known to the slapstick art, including a wall motto, "Love Thy Neighbor." His private room is a comfortable study. An alcove opening from it is his dressing room. On a costumer in the alcove hang the celebrated Chaplin habiliments, including three bowler hats. Reverently we examined the hats. Each of them had been bashed in by many a stuffed club and falling wall and the tears neatly sewed up again with surgical precision so that now the crowns were criss crossed with honorable scars. The size is 7⅛. Also in the alcove is a dressing table with three mirrors, and on the table I hastily noted a button hook, a shoe horn, a pair of scissors, a comb, grease paints and a box of cornstarch. The furniture in the big outer room includes a large leather covered davenport and chairs, a flat mahogany desk, bare of papers as an industrial captain's should be, and a small shelf of books. On the shelf were copies of *Punch* and *Le Rire*, a collection of poems, "Behold the Man"; "Shakespeare in London," "La Vie des Lettres" and "Through the Russian Revolution," by Albert Rhys Williams. These samples attested the truth of what I had heard about the range of Chaplin's reading.

In a cement walk outside the stage those toeing out footsteps have been preserved for the puzzlement of future zoologists. On the day of the cornerstone laying Chaplin pranced the length of the walk, which was still soft, and wrote his name in the soft concrete block, with the date, January 21, 1918.

Famous Players Set in Frame of Pepper Trees

Continuing our drive through Hollywood we came next to the studios of the Famous Players-Lasky Company. It covers two blocks near the center of town, one for the offices, stages, and other permanent buildings, one for the outdoor sets. Both are fringed with graceful pepper trees. Here the sealed door opened with the pressure of a button because a good friend left the password at the gate. It is so hard to get by this gate that the visitor shoots through in a hurry for fear some mistake has been made. He finds himself in a hard packed sanded street flanked on one side by the low office buildings, on the other by three or four monster stages of the now familiar sort, a blending of warehouse and conservatory. My friend took me into one of the stages. It was a vast place. We threaded our way among darkened sets until, rounding one of them, we came upon a patch of brilliant light. Moving closer we saw that the rays of the lights, fifteen of them I should say, trained from an upper level as well as the floor, converged at a spot where stood a stalwart young man in khaki breeches and cobalt blue, open throated shirt. He was in the act of defying a fat, epauletted, much medaled Latin American generalissimo. A director whom I couldn't see called "All ready." Epaulettes turned his head to blow out a lungful of cigarette smoke and then, while the handsome Gringo regarded him tensely, the camera began grinding. Around the room in which this episode was being filmed were scattered other Latins—ragged peons with conical straw hats and haughty lieutenants of the big chief. I knew nothing more except that they were doing "The Dictator" and the hero with the blue shirt was Wallace Reid. The director, James Cruze, was getting whatever effects he wanted by speaking softly. Where is the lair of the cursing, slave driving director? I saw none of his kind anywhere in Hollywood.

Through another cavernous stage, labyrinth of sets, past the tank where sank the Lusitania in Mary Pickford's "Little American," we walked until we struck another circle of light. This time we looked into the living room of a South African farmhouse. A young man sat at a table, covered with red damask, playing cards with a blond who was fair to behold. You could tell by the way she pretended to study the cards while listening for a sound of approaching hoofbeats that she was using the card game as a ruse to hold the young man until a rescuer came galloping up. The players were Dorothy Dalton and Milton Sills. This ended their day's work. Sills chatted a moment with the director, George Melford, and left the stage with a blue book under his arm. "Looking for orgies, I suppose," he said, passing us. "My personal hobby is decadent literature. Look at it." The book was Robinson's "English Flower Gardens."

Another set on the Lasky lot proved to be a boudoir. A beautiful young woman with loosed blonde hair cascading over a negligee house gown stood with her back to the wall. This was Agnes Ayres. The faultless face and form of the young man whom she held captive while registering anguish was that of Conrad Nagel.

From Lasky's we went over to the United Studios, one of the largest in Hollywood. Outwardly it might be a gardener's lodge on a fine estate. Inwardly it has real gardens and four streets bordered with cottages which are used as settings as well for offices and dressing rooms. One of these, a red roofed cottage, housed Mary Pickford and her staff while "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was being made. She and her husband have their own studio now. We entered a stage which is 300 feet long and 160 feet wide. We passed a gorgeous throne room and the interior of the British House of Commons and stopped at a bower where Guy Bates Post was at work on one of the difficult double exposure scenes of "The Masquerader." Post, in evening dress, was standing at a door of the bower and gazing anxiously into the night. And out of the night the camera was shooting him, through the door.

Richard Walton Tully, adapter of Temple Thurston's novel for stage use, was there in the capacity of supervisor. The director, James Young, was somewhere about. But the man who really directs the action for double exposure is the camera man. There is a chalk line on the floor which the actor must not pass with foot or gesture. The camera man, looking into his finder, is the only man who can tell when this line is threatened. This camera man, while he cranked, was saying: "A little closer, Mr. Post—a couple of inches yet—look out—you've reached the limit—step back a little, Mr. Post—now all right—show yourself more from behind the door—that's good." And Post was obeying too.

"How much now?" Tully inquired.

"Fifty feet," said the camera man.

"Enough." The cranking stopped. Only five feet of film were needed for this little scene. The five feet that show the actor with the expression and attitude best expressing the emotion of the moment will be cut out and used, the remaining forty-five discarded.

Our studio tour ended with a visit to Universal City, several miles north of Hollywood, in San Fernando Valley, reached by way of a deep and fragrant canyon, Cahuenga Pass. Here is the world's largest motion picture expanse. There is no city in the ordinary sense, nothing but the Universal plant, but its completeness makes it a film metropolis. To the original 250 acres have recently been added 350 more. Among its accessories are a menagerie and a ranch with a full complement of cowboys and Mexicans and bronchos, not to mention mesquite and chaparral.

In the course of time a sojourn in the studio country dulls one's appreciation of marvels, but something came into our vision as we approached Universal City that proved we were not yet jaded. On the crest of a lofty hill, across the tops of the white buildings in the valley, we saw a full rigged, three masted ship. On that hilltop "Robinson Crusoe" is being filmed. The reason was plain enough when given. It is cheaper to build a ship on a hill near the studio than it is to go down to San Pedro and buy or rent one. And on the hill the camera, shooting always at a background of sky, attains the desired effect as of an illimitable ocean. Opposite the entrance to Universal City is a perfect reproduction of a section of waterfront and pier as seen from the street of a seaport, with yellow funnels rising from a dummy steamship aboard which countless anxious couples have eloped to Buenos Aires and Singapore. Just inside the main gate stands a trolley car labeled "Monte Carlo" in front and "Battery Park" behind. Such are the wonders of movieland.

(To be concluded.)